

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY) : (a) to (d) There is no reliable information to suggest that there is an increase in hormone-related diseases. A programme for control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders, a nutrition-related disorder caused by the imbalance of hormones has been taken up which, inter alia, comprises surveying the population, propagating the use of iodated salt and building awareness in the community. A scheme for creating awareness about the primary prevention of diabetes is also receiving attention. Facilities for diagnosis and treatment of hormone-related disorders have also been built up in selected hospitals in the Government and private sector.

[English]

Indo-Bangladesh Talks

*307. SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to the reply given to unstarred Question No. 2281 on March 10, 1997 regarding Indians in Bangladesh and state :

(a) the main points discussed in the third meeting of Indo-Bangladesh Joint Working Group held in Delhi during January, 1997 and final outcome of the point discussed;

(b) the number of survey teams working for completion of the demarcation of land boundary till January, 1997 and number of teams increased till date; and

(c) whether the increase in number of survey teams has helped the Government in demarcation of land boundary, if so, to what extent?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) With reference to answer given on March 10, 1997 regarding Indians in Bangladesh, the main points discussed in the 3rd meeting of Indo-Bangladesh Joint Working Group held in Delhi during January, 1997 were security related issues, cross border movements, repatriation of Chakma refugees, review of existing visa regime, Director-General level meetings between Border Security Force and Bangladesh Rifles activating the mechanism of nodal officers, and border demarcation. In regard to border demarcation, both sides recognised the need for early completion of demarcation of land boundary between the two countries. In this connection, both sides agreed on the need to increase the number of survey teams for early completion of the work. The Indian side also explained that the exchange of enclaves could take place only after the demarcation is complete, and necessary legal and constitutional formalities are completed as per Indian laws.

(b) and (c) There is one survey team each jointly deployed by each country on the Indo-Bangladesh boundary in West Bengal sector, Meghalaya sector, Assam sector and Tripura sector till January, 1997. The number of teams has not been increased since then. However, in the West Bengal sector, where bulk of the boundary demarcation work is going on, the composition of the survey teams jointly deployed for demarcation work from December, 1996 onwards was increased to two surveyors, four Amins and two computers. During the Boundary Conference for the West Bengal sector held in Dhaka from July 18-21, 1997 both sides agreed to further strengthen the survey teams to a strength of two surveyors, seven amins and two computers from each side.

As a result of the strengthening of the survey teams in West Bengal sector during the field season 1996-97, the instrumental work by theodolite traverse was completed along the undemarcated portion of the boundary including those along the periphery of adversely possessed areas. In addition, instrumental observations have been completed for accurate calculation of areas of adverse possessions in South Beruberi, Khudipara and Singpara areas.

Sino-Indian Relationship

*308. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :
SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether China has made it clear that they are not going to support and aid the rebel groups from North East India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether China has also decided not to support the self-determination of Kashmir issue;

(d) if so, to what extent India has welcomed this move; and

(e) the fresh initiatives taken by both the Governments to strengthen the ties in the field of trade, investment and other areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA) : (a) to (e) The Chinese Government have denied that they are extending assistance to separatist movements. China maintains that it has never interfered in the internal affairs of other countries and would never do so.

China has said that the Kashmir question is a legacy of history. China has expressed the hope that India and Pakistan would seek a settlement of this question through patient consultations and peaceful negotiations. It is the consistent position of Government that Jammu & Kashmir is an integral part of India and will remain so.

India and China have agreed to work towards development of mutually beneficial relations in all areas and to focus on imparting greater economic and technological content to bilateral relations. Bilateral trade has reached US \$ 1.4 billion in 1996. There are more than 50 joint ventures between the two sides. In recent years, India and China have expanded functional cooperation exchanges in diverse fields. The next meeting of the Joint Economic Group and the Sub Group on Science & Technology between India and China is expected to be convened later this year.

Harassment of Maid Servants

*309. SHRI T. GOVINDAN :

PROF. P.J. KURIEN :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the number of maid-servants from India working in gulf countries;

(b) whether Government have received complaints of physical, mental and even sexual torture of these maid servants;

(c) if so, the number of such complaints received during the last one year;

(d) the action taken by the Government on these complaints; and

(e) the steps the Government propose to take to ensure the safety of these maid servants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) to (e) The exact number of Indian maid servants working in Gulf countries at any given moment would be difficult to calculate, as after obtaining emigration clearance, they neither register themselves with Missions/Posts on arrival nor on departure from the country of employment. However, the exact number of house maids who were given emigration clearance by the Ministry of Labour over the last three years is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

Mission-wise number of complaints received from maid servants working in Gulf countries during the last one year is given in the attached statement. The complaints mostly relate to non-payment or delayed payment of wages, long and arduous hours of work without adequate compensation, denial of leave to come to India, withholding of travel documents by sponsors, non-fulfilment of contractual obligations, ill-treatment, etc. There have been a few complaints of sexual harassment also.

Whenever Missions/Posts receive complaints from maid servants, they promptly take up the matter with the sponsor/employer to settle the matter. Wherever necessary, the matter is taken up with the concerned authorities of the foreign Governments to persuade the

employer to redress the grievances. When no solution is possible despite the best efforts of the Missions/Posts, all assistance is given to facilitate repatriation of the aggrieved maid servants.

To prevent possible abuse, those below of the age of 40 years are not given emigration clearance to take-up jobs abroad as house maids. Moreover, it is also obligatory that agreements pertaining to the recruitment of house maids be duly attested by the concerned Indian Mission for getting emigration clearance.

Statement

Number of Complainis received by Missions in Gulf countries during last one year

Mission in	No. of complaints
1. United Arab Emirates	24
2. Iraq	Nil
3. Bahrain	74
4. Saudi Arabia	190
5. Oman	97
6. Kuwait	850
7. Yemen	4
8. Qatar	216

Hepatitis-C

*310. DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have issued notification for making the screening of Hepatitis-C mandatory for all blood donations from July 1, 1997;

(b) if so, whether the Government had adequate stock of kits for supplying to all Central, State and other non-Governmental organisations who are maintaining blood banks in the country before the issues of the notification;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the further steps the Government propose to take in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) The feasibility of inclusion of mandatory screening of blood for Hepatitis-C requires an indepth deliberations among experts from the field of Transfusion medicine and Administrators, to have a technical and economic analysis and to work out a time schedule. Till such time HCV testing of blood will remain voluntary.